

Brazilian Press Wants Its Share of Google's Billions

Contributed by Francesco Neves
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The Brazilian press knows it is not going to be a walk in the park, but this is not preventing it from taking on Internet search giants like Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

What the owners of newspapers in Brazil want is their share of the billions those companies get for indexing all the content, news and opinion pieces, they produce day in and day out at high cost.

It was the just-reelected president of Brazil's Newspapers National Association (ANJ), Nelson Sirotsky, who announced at the closing of the 6th Brazilian Newspapers Congress that he is going to try to engage in a dialogue with Brazilian and international search engine companies.

Sirotsky is not talking about any lawsuit at the moment, but he isn't discounting this possibility either. Another item disclosed by the ANJ's honcho is that his association will soon start a program to raise the interest of school children in reading newspapers.

According to Sirotsky, what the Internet search companies are doing is embezzlement since they are presenting material they didn't produce themselves and then fraudulently keeping money that doesn't belong to them. Sirotsky doesn't want, however, to close these indexing services as long as they share the money they are making with the content producers.

In Brazil many newspapers and magazines are already keeping the search engines outside their borders. The site Universo on Line (UOL), for example, hosts dozens of publications including Brazil's largest-circulation newspaper and magazine, Folha de S. Paulo and Veja, respectively.

They are open exclusively for paying members and out of the search engines' reach. They have, however, stripped down Internet versions of their product. The same happens to O Estado de S. Paulo, another national high-circulation daily.

Commenting on Sirotsky proposal, São Paulo governor, Cláudio Lembo told reporters, "It is natural that the newspapers demand their copyrights, since they are the ones who invest in the production of this content." Lembo, as well as Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took part in the ANJ's meeting

Nelson Sirotsky, who is director-president of the group RBS, from the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, says that the printed newspapers are entering "a revival cycle."

And he added, "A few years ago we used to talk with much skepticism and worry about our activity's future outlook. Fortunately, we had the chance to witness, during our meeting, that we are living a cycle of new opportunities, thanks to our technological environment and the habits of our consumers."